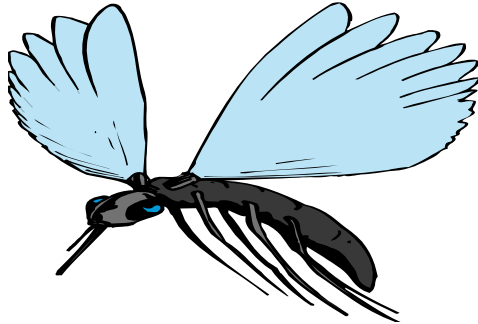


West Nile Virus



Recently, we have heard a great deal about West Nile Virus. This message is intended as a general fact sheet for your information and use. It is not all inclusive, but should meet your general concerns. Information provided has been obtained from the Wake County, North Carolina Environmental Services.

What is West Nile Virus?

West Nile is a virus carried by mosquitoes that can cause illness and in some cases death to some people.

How is West Nile Virus Spread?

People can get West Nile virus from the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes become infected with West Nile virus from feeding on wild birds infected with the virus. Mosquitoes can then transmit the virus to people or to animals. There is also reason to believe that the virus may be transmitted via blood transfusions.

What are the Symptoms?

Most people who are infected with West Nile virus suffer no symptoms at all. West Nile virus may cause headache, fever, swollen glands, muscle aches, and often a rash. In severe cases it may cause an infection of the brain called "encephalitis."

Who is Most at Risk from West Nile Virus?

People 50 years of age or older and those with health problems are most at risk for serious illness due to West Nile.

Is there a Vaccine for West Nile Virus?

Currently, the only vaccine available for West Nile virus is for horses. There is no vaccine available for human use.

What can I do to Protect Myself from West Nile Virus?

Avoiding mosquito bites can greatly reduce your chance of becoming infected with West Nile virus. To avoid bites:

- Wear long-sleeve shirts and pants.
- Avoid places where there are a lot of mosquitoes.
- Avoid being outdoors when there are a lot of mosquitoes, particularly at dusk and dawn.

- Use repellents containing DEET (30% or less for adults, 10% or less for children) to prevent mosquito bites. Make sure you follow the directions for proper use.

You can also protect yourself, your family, and your community from West Nile virus and other illnesses carried by mosquitoes by helping to reduce mosquito breeding sites as follows:

- Empty, destroy, recycle, or cover containers like tires, tin cans, buckets, and bottles that hold water where mosquitoes can lay their eggs.
- Change water in pet bowls and bird baths at least once a week.
- Remove or empty dishes under potted plants.
- Stock ponds and ditches with native fish.
- Cover unused pools.
- Clean clogged rain gutters.
- Repair leaky outdoor faucets.
- Put special "Donuts" made with mosquito-killing bacteria in water where mosquito eggs may hatch.

What Should I do if I Think I Have Been Infected with West Nile Virus?

Anyone who may be ill from West Nile virus should see a doctor as soon as possible. Although there is no cure for the infection, most people who are infected with West Nile virus have only mild symptoms, if any at all, and recover fully with supportive treatment. Remember; always check with your doctor.

Can Animals Become Infected With West Nile Virus?

West Nile infection is extremely rare in all animals except for birds and horses.

- Signs of infection in a horse may include nervousness, irritability, staggering, and lack of coordination.
- There is currently no vaccine to protect horses from West Nile virus infection.